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*Testimony*

*Ray Rossomando*

*Connecticut Education Association*

*Before the*

***Public Health Committee***

***HB5730 AAC Reimbursement for Services Provided at School-Based  
Health Centers***

*February 26, 2013*

Good afternoon Senator Gerratana, Representative Johnson, and members of the Public Health Committee. My name is Ray Rossomando, Research and Policy Development Specialist for the Connecticut Education Association. CEA represents 43,000 members who are active and retired teachers across the state.

Everyone agrees that for Connecticut to make real progress toward closing the achievement gap, all hands must be on deck. Children facing the greatest challenges in the classroom, quite often experience poor access to nutrition and health care, as well as other challenges and needs associated with poverty. Consequently, public schooling in Connecticut must be about more than simply what happens in the classroom. It must also be about the daily needs of students and their access to services, support, and resources that are enriching to the mind, body, and readiness for learning. We are testifying today in support of public health bills that would help address these needs.

**CEA supports HB 5730**, which would encourage school districts to maximize federal reimbursement for qualifying school-based health services. At no time does it make sense to leave federal funds on the table. With greater pressures placed on school budgets, higher goals expected from students, and more students in need of social services to achieve such goals, marshaling and managing resources is key. By requiring school-based health centers to seek Medicaid and private

insurance, more resources can be made available. However, while withholding funds may be an effective incentive for some centers, we would be concerned if others risked losing their critical funds, particularly if there were other ways to encourage participation. We urge committee members to consider alternative means for assisting and otherwise encouraging centers to take on this task, which can be somewhat complex.

Thank you.